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WALKING IN LARGE FOOTPRINTS AND FORGING NEW PATHS

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I entered graduate school in political science at the University of Rochester in 1989 after several years working in the US Senate and lobbying for the Office of the State of New York. I was originally hoping to study voting behavior, but then I took one class with Linda Powell on legislative behavior and I was hooked on Congress. Late in the spring of my first year at Rochester, Linda told me that Richard (Dick) Fenno was looking for a research assistant starting that summer and asked if I would be interested. As my best friend Fiona McGillivray remarked that day, "Well, that's a career maker." And she was right.

I often think about what might have happened if Linda Powell had not taught that class my first year; that she was a senior female professor studying public opinion, legislative politics, and campaign finance; who was impressive to me both for her research and because she was (and still is) a successful female academic. What if she had not passed on the job opportunity with one of the most famous Congress scholars in the past 50 years? Would I have sought out that opportunity on my own? Probably not. Would I today? Absolutely.

In addition to Linda Powell, Rochester already had produced several female PhDs who made their mark in the field of legislative studies, including Christine DeGregorio, Diana Evans, Linda Fowler, and Barbara Decker Sinclair, among others. Later, at Princeton on a postdoc, I met Carol Swain who had just won the Woodrow Wilson APSA award for *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress* (Swain 1993). Because of the encouragement and success of women who had come before me in the field, I did not see barriers to entry to the field of legislative studies. When I published my first article on bill sponsorship in the Senate in the *American Journal of Political Science* (Schiller 1995), it seemed as if the sky would be the limit for publishing more quantitative work on the Senate in other journals. In that era, most of the peer-reviewed articles that were published on Congress featured the House of Representatives, which had the advantage of a more formal rules structure and a much larger N than the Senate. However, throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, work on the Senate became more quantitative, and technology allowed for a broader analysis of individual legislative behavior of the type that dominated Senate life more so than the House.

In general, I sought to publish other articles associated with my dissertation and projects on the Senate, but I encountered more rejection than success. What I did not do was persevere and seek a wider range of outlets for my published work. Facing rejection

at the "top" journals, I shelved manuscripts instead of revising and resubmitting them. Years later, I realize that for most people reading a CV—especially university administrators—a longer list of published articles always ranks higher than a shorter list of articles in more prestigious journals. This is a key lesson for younger colleagues, both female and male.

I also found that coauthorship networks tended to be male dominated, but that very well could have been a function of the ratio of male to female graduate students in the area of legislative studies rather than a purposeful exclusionary practice. These types of networks also were evident in the "circuit" of presenting papers in departmental seminars, which was a key way of having work recognized and improving it for potential reviewers who could be chosen from these seminars. Women coming up in the field should not hesitate to ask their colleagues in other departments to invite them for talks to present their work; when there is an opportunity in their own department to run a seminar series, they should be sure to reciprocate. Parallel to this would be trying to secure invitations to smaller conferences that increasingly are becoming important incubators for published work. There were fewer of these types of conferences 20 years ago, but now they frequently produce opportunities to vet articles and book ideas.

Women scholars in legislative studies also should be encouraged to apply for grants, ranging from the Dirksen Center research grants to National Science Foundation (NSF) grants, to fund their work. Grants are not important only for securing the resources to conduct research; they also are key to establishing the external validity of work and forging a distinct reputation among department colleagues and administrators. In my case, as a tenured associate professor, I worked with Charles Stewart (of MIT)—who was senior to me in rank and reputation in the area of congressional history—to secure an NSF grant to study the indirect elections of US Senators. He and I had separately been pursuing parallel tracks on the question of indirect Senate elections, and it seemed to be a good opportunity to work together. Some observers would argue that it is exactly the wrong strategy for a woman in choosing research partnerships because men frequently receive more credit for joint projects than their female colleagues. However, that was not my experience at all. We worked together successfully, presenting papers and publishing an article and a book from the project. Although gendered asymmetry in rank is not always an advisable feature on coauthorship partnerships, doing so to pursue major grants and publications can further a career.

For legislative scholars today, as in prior years, publishing a book rather than a series of journal articles may still be the "gold standard" for staking out intellectual property rights. The year I started graduate school (1989), Barbara Sinclair published *The Transformation of the US Senate* and Steve Smith published *Call to Order: Floor Politics in the House and Senate*, which were foundational in their push to study the Senate on par with the House. It would be seven to 10 more years before Sarah Binder and Steve Smith published *Politics or Principle? Filibustering in the United States Senate* (1996); Frances Lee and Bruce Oppenheimer published *Sizing up the Senate: The Unequal Consequences of Equal Representation* (1999); and I published *Partners and Rivals: Representation in US Senate Delegations* (2000). It would be another 10 years after that when we could argue that the Senate would reach almost parity with the House as the subject of exploration in the legislative studies subfield. This was demonstrated by an increase in peer-reviewed journal articles and books, including *Party Polarization in Congress* by

Sean Theriault (2008) and *Beyond Ideology: Politics, Principles, and Partisanship in the US Senate* by Frances Lee (2009).

In addition to Sinclair, Binder, and Lee, women scholars in legislative studies have made their mark on the field with important books ranging from Michele Swers's 2002 work on women in Congress in *The Difference Women Make: The Policy Impact of Women in Congress*; to Katherine Tate's work (2003) on black representation in *Black Faces in the Mirror: African Americans and Their Representatives in the US Congress*; to Tracy Sulkin's work (2005) on the impact of campaigns on agenda setting in *Issue Politics in Congress*; to Laurel Harbridge's work (2015) on bipartisan lawmaking in *Is Bipartisanship Dead? Policy Agreement and Agenda-Setting in the House of Representatives*; to Gisela Sin's work (2014) on structural distribution of power in *Separation of Powers and Legislative Organization*; to Kathryn Pearson's work (2015) on party leadership in *Party Discipline in the US House of Representatives*. This more recent cohort of female scholars in legislative politics is carrying on the tradition of their predecessors and pushing the boundaries of legislative scholarship much farther. What marks these women as fundamentally different and strategically savvy is that they also published articles in a range of journals on their book topics, as well as other subjects.

Given the expansion of the discipline of political science, women have much more choice in their areas of specialization. However, on the face of it, the landscape for legislative scholars is more constrained than in prior decades. The degree of polarization and centralized party control in both chambers has produced gridlock as well as a smaller space for individual entrepreneurship and less overall legislating. There must be stories to tell and puzzles to explain, and Congress has not been cooperative in this regard. But the beauty of studying the American Congress is that every two years, the cast of characters can change and party control sometimes changes with them. In 2018, the shift in leadership control of the House, as well as the election of more black and Latino legislators, created the potential for renewed research on legislative agenda setting and

intersectionality in representation. This is an opportunity to increase the number and success of women in legislative studies, starting with encouraging female students at the undergraduate level to pursue a PhD in political science and then making sure that they climb every rung of the proverbial ladder with as much confidence, ambition, and strategic self-promotion as their male colleagues. ■

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